

Message Text

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FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6135

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: TPHY, CH

SUBJECT: CHINA EARTHQUAKE - JAPANESE VIEWS

REF: PEKING 1505, STATE 190967 (NOTAL)

1. PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT PROVIDED IN STATE REFTEL WAS VERY HELPFUL, AND WE USED ITS SUBSTANCE, WITH APPROPRIATE CAVEATS BASED ON PARA 4, IN DISCUSSIONS WITH EMBASSIES (JAPAN, CANADA, U.K., AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND) WITH WHICH WE HAVE BEEN MEETING DAILY. JAPANESE EMBASSY AUGUST 5 PROVIDED TO THIS GROUP, ON THE SAME BASIS, COMMENTS MADE ON AUGUST 4 BY JAPANESE SCIENTISTS REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY THAT STRONG TREMORS MIGHT STILL OCCUR IN THE PEKING AREA. THE CHINESE APPEAR NOW, PER PEKING REFTEL, TO BE SOFT-PEDALING THIS POSSIBILITY, BUT JAPANESE ASSESSMENTS, WHICH FOLLOW, DO NOT.

3. UNOFFICIAL VIEW OF PROFESAORS ASADA AND SUZUKI, SEISMOLOGY AND VOLCANOLOGY DEPARTMENT, JAPAN LAND SURVEY COUNCIL

(EXCERPT):

BEGIN QUOTE:

"IN GENERAL, THE FREQUENCY OF AFTERSHOCKS FOLLOWING A BIG EARTHQUAKE DECREASES AS THE TIME GOES ON. SO DOES THEIR MAGNITUDE. AMONG AFTERSHOCKS, HOWEVER, THERE ARE THOSZD WHOSE MAGNITUDE IS CLOSE TO THAT OF THE MAINSHOCK AND WHICH

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OCCUR A FAIRLY LONG TIME AFTER THE MAIN ONE. END QUOTE.

4. PERSONAL VIEW OF MR. SEKIYA, CHIEF OF SEISMOGRAPHY CENTER,
SEISMOLOGY DIVISION, NATIONAL METEOROLOGY AGENCY: BEGIN QUOTE:

A STRONG AFTERSHOCK (MAGNITUDE 7.2) OCCURRED SOME
FIFTEEN HOURS AFTER THE MAIN SHOCK. ACCORDING TO PRE-
CEDENTS, IN SUCH CASES, AFTERSHOCKS MAY LAST OVER A LONG
TIME AND ALSO STRONG AFTERSHOCKS MAY BE OBSERVED.
AFTERSHOCKS OCCUR USUALLY WITHIN A RADIUS OF ABOUT
100 KM FROM THE ORIGINAL POINT. THEIR EPICENTERS
"MIGRATE" WITHIN THIS RADIUS.

WE MAY REFER TO THE CASE OF TOKACHI EARTHQUAKE
(1968, MAGNITUDE 7.9), WHICH HAD APPROXIMATELY THE SAME
MAGNITUDE AS THIS ONE AND WAS FOLLOWED BY STRONG AFTER-
SHOCKS WITHIN A SHORT TIME. ONE AFTERSHAKE BEYOND M7 WAS
RECORDED FOURTEEN HOURS AFTER THE MAIN SHOCK AND ANOTHER
ONE WITHIN ONE MONTH ALSO BEYOND M7. ACTIVE TREMORS
WERE RECORDED OVER A PERIOD OF THREE MONTH'S TIME.
END QUOTE.

5. WE ARE OF COURSE CONTINUING TO BASE OUR OWN PLANS PRIMARILY
ON THE DATA AND ADVICE (VAGE THOUGH MUCH OF IT IS) WE RECEIVE
PERIODICALLY FROM THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES. WE WOULD BE
PARTICULARLY INTERESTED, HOWEVER, TO LEARN OF ANY U.S. OR
THIRD COUNTRY CONCLUSIONS AS TO WHICH OF THE NORTH CHINA PLAIN
STRUCTURES MENTIONED IN PARA 3 OF THE STATE REFTEL IS THE ONE
INVOLVED IN THE JULY 28 EARTHQUAKE.
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